DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 195 161 FL 011 981

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TITLE Rhythm and Unstress.
INSTITUTION Public Service Commission of Canada, Ottawa (Ontario). Language Training Branch.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 30p.
AVAILABLE FROM Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services, Hull, Quebec, Canada K1A 0S9 ($1.75)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Drills (Practice): *English (Second Language): Instructional Materials: *Intonation: Language Patterns: Postsecondary Education: *Pronunciation: *Stress (Phonology): Syllables
IDENTIFIERS French Speaking: *Rhythm

ABSTRACT

This booklet deals with sentence rhythm and stress in the English language. It is intended for English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and is particularly appropriate for native speakers of French. Based on the cognitive approach to language learning, the booklet presents first an analysis of the material to be learned, and secondly, drills and exercises for practice in listening, production, and automation. In the first section the following topics are addressed: (1) contrastive rhythm: (2) comparative sentences: (3) English as a stress-timed language: (4) general rules and examples of stressed and unstressed syllables: (5) helpful hints on function words, contractions, prefixes and suffixes, and reduced phrases. The second section, "Drills and Exercises" contains 13 types of rhythm and stress exercises as well as suggestions for active listening. Examples of phrases and sentences in French are provided where contrast or comparison with patterns in another language is appropriate. Stress and rhythm patterns are illustrated with pen and ink drawings. (AMH)

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Rhythm and Unstress

by Howard B. Woods

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STRESS

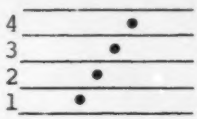
STRESS - the loudness of a syllable or word.
A base drum might be the best musical instrument to illustrate variation in stress; the harder one beats it the louder it becomes, but the pitch or tone remains relatively constant.
The degree of stress will be indicated by the size of the dot. · · • ●

RHYTHM - the pattern of stress variation in continuous speech.

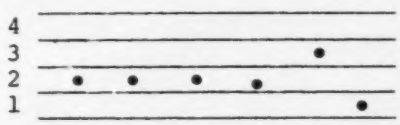
· ● · ● · · ● ·

PITCH

PITCH - the high or low tone of a sound as determined by the frequency of vibration of the vocal cords.
A xylophone or a glockenspiel might best illustrate pitch. A different tone is heard each time another bar is struck but volume or loudness is relatively constant.
Pitch will be illustrated by the vertical position of the dot.



INTONATION - the pattern of pitch variations in continuous speech.



N.B. Pitch and intonation have been excluded from this module in order that stress can be introduced more clearly and simply.

This booklet forms part of *Contact Canada*, a course for teaching English to adult Francophones in the Public Service of Canada.
See in particular other books in the phonological series by Howard B. Woods, M.A., B.Sc.:
Syllable Stress
Intonation
Sound Production: th
Sound Production: h
Sound Production: Vowels

The author wishes to express special thanks to Derrick Wimble and his students for their help and advice during classroom trials.

2nd Edition

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Available by mail from

Printing and Publishing
Supply and Services
Ottawa, CANADA K1A 0S9

or through your bookseller

INTRODUCTION

A small percentage of language learners are born with what many people would call a "musical ear" i.e., the ability to hear and imitate perfectly, or nearly so, the individual sounds, the stress, the rhythm, and the intonation of a new language. We other unfortunate people who do not have this gift have to be shown how to listen to a new language, and we have to be taught how to produce the new sounds.

This booklet deals with one of the most difficult aspects of English, namely sentence rhythm and stress. In developing this booklet we have adhered to the basic philosophy of the cognitive approach in that first, an analysis of the material to be learned is presented, and secondly, we offer drills and exercises for practice in listening, production, and automation.

May we emphasize that the rhythm and stress patterns presented and drilled in this module conform to standard English usage as observed by leading language teachers and linguists in several English speaking nations.

NOTE ON THE SECOND EDITION

We have changed the title of this booklet from *Rhythm and Stress* to *Rhythm and Unstress* in order to focus on the fact that it is the learning of the reduced or unstressed syllables that is most difficult for the students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Contrastive Rhythm 1

B. Comparative Sentences 2

C. English is a Stress-Timed Language 3

D. Which Syllable should be Unstressed or Stressed? 5
1. Content Words 5
2. Function Words 5
3. Compound Words 6
4. The Pronunciation of Unstressed Words 6

E. Helpful Hints 7
1. Function Words 8
2. Contractions 8
3. Prefixes and Suffixes 8
4. Reduced Phrases 9

II. DRILLS AND EXERCISES

A. Function Word Drills 11

B. Phrases in Phonetic Script 12

C. Dictation 12

D. Metronome Drills 13

E. Mark and Say 14

F. Speed and Rhythm 15

G. Congruent Patterns 16

H. Creating Sentences..... 16

I. Matching Patterns 17

J. Modal Verbs 17

K. Poems 18

L. Two Word Verbs and Pronouns 21

M. Listen and Repeat 22

N. Active Listening 22

O. Final Considerations 22

REFERENCE BOOKS 24

I. Background Information

A. CONTRASTIVE RHYTHM

The difference between stressed and unstressed syllables in English is much greater than in most other languages. This is the case both for stress patterns within sentences and words. To an anglophone the rhythm of many languages (particularly French, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Czech, and Cantonese) sounds mechanically regular and rapid - a series of bursts of sound all of about equal size and force, like machine-gun fire. English pronounced with such a rhythm and stress pattern sounds extremely rapid and is difficult to understand. A pictorial representation of the rhythm and stress of a French sentence might be a line of soldiers of uniform size spaced at regular intervals marching at a constant double-time cadence. (See figure below)

The rhythm of a French sentence

The syllable in an English sentence could best be represented by a series of family groups each composed of an adult in charge of infants and teenagers. Some of the adults would be childless, and the last adult would be a giant. A least a third of the individuals would be babies; these babies are a distinguishing characteristic of English. Much time and effort must be expended on learning to pronounce these "baby" or mini-syllables. (See figure below.)

The rhythm of an English sentence

B. COMPARATIVE SENTENCES

Here are some English and French sentences with stress levels indicated by the size of the dots. The pin-point dots represent unstressed syllables. Notice how many unstressed syllables there are in these English sentences, and that the French sentences have no unstressed syllables. Every syllable in French has a fairly forceful stress while the final syllable of each phrase has a somewhat larger stress. (Compare the following sentences.)

The English course is really exciting.

Le cours d'anglais est vraiment excitant.

The girl turned the radio off.

La jeune fille a fermé le radio.

The teachers arrived this morning.

Les professeurs sont arrivés ce matin.

It's easy to see that you have cheated.

On voit bien que vous avez triché.

My children don't speak English well.

Mes enfants ne parlent pas bien l'anglais.

She has just written the monthly report.

Elle vient d'écrire le rapport mensuel.

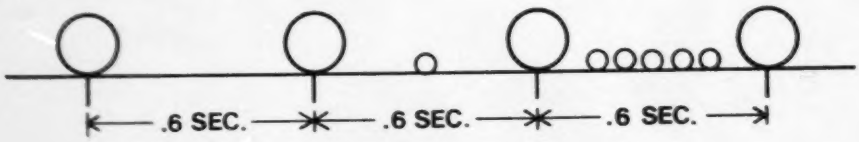
C. ENGLISH IS A STRESS-TIMED LANGUAGE

In French the length of time required to pronounce a sentence is determined by the total number of syllables. Two sentences containing an equal number of syllables are therefore of equal duration. French is called a syllable-timed language.

In English, on the other hand, it is the number of stressed syllables - only the stressed syllables - that determines the length of time required to pronounce a sentence. The unstressed syllables are so unimportant, rhythmically speaking, that they do not appreciably affect the length of time of pronunciation. Each stressed syllable fills about one half second in time whether it stands alone or whether it dominates several unstressed syllables. English is a stress-timed language.

STRESS SYLLABLES TEND TO RECUR AT REGULARLY TIMED INTERVALS

Each stressed syllable occupies approximately one half second in time whether it stands alone or whether it dominates several unstressed syllables. A graphic representation of a stress-timed sentence shows a sequence of accented syllables regularly occurring at .6 sec. intervals.



Stressed syllables occur every .6 sec.

No matter how many unstressed syllables there are between the stressed syllables the beat or rhythm remains constant.

If there are three, four, or five unstressed syllables between the stressed syllables, these must of necessity be pronounced rapidly and indistinctly. After all, you have .6 second only.

If, on the other hand, no unstressed syllable is between accents, then the stressed syllables are lengthened to fill out the .6 second.

One or two unstressed syllables in the environment of a stressed syllable could be considered normal and average.

LONG AND SHORT SENTENCES MAY REQUIRE EQUAL TIME

Let us look at two sentences which will demonstrate the rhythm and stress timed features of the English language.

The cat is interested in protecting her kittens.

Large cars waste gas.

An Anglophone will rush over the unstressed syllables in the first sentence so as to gain time for the full pronunciation of the stressed syllables thereby maintaining the rhythm. Liaison is in full-swing whenever we find several unstressed syllables.

In pronouncing the second sentence, an Anglophone will prolong and stretch out the stressed syllables and produce less liaison in order to compensate for the lack of unstressed syllables thus filling the time gaps and maintaining the rhythm.

It takes approximately the same length of time to say the second sentence containing only four syllables as it does to say the first sentence containing fourteen syllables. The explanation is, of course, that both sentences have four stressed syllables, and that the pronunciation time of a sentence is determined by the number of stressed syllables.

D. WHICH SYLLABLES SHOULD BE STRESSED?

Linguists categorize all words into two groups (A) content words, which are laden with semantic meaning, like horse, ride, beautiful and tonight; and (B) function words, which have little semantic meaning but do have a grammatical meaning or role which "glues" the content words together. These words express the relationship between content words; some examples are a, the, and, and to. In normal usage one syllable of a content word is stressed, but no syllable of a function word is stressed except when one wants to give special emphasis to a particular function word, c.f. I said in the desk not on it.

1. CONTENT WORDS HAVE ONE STRESSED SYLLABLE

a. Nouns
b. Verbs
c. Adjectives
d. Adverbs (including not)
e. Interrogatives: where, when, etc.
f. Auxiliary verbs contracted with not.
g. Possessive pronouns mine, hers, etc.

2. FUNCTION WORDS ARE UNSTRESSED

a. Articles: a, an, the.
b. Prepositions: to, for, of, etc.
c. Personal pronouns: I, me, she, them, etc.
d. Possessive adjectives: my, your, her.
e. Demonstratives: this, that, these, those.
f. Relative pronouns: which, that, who.
g. Conjunctions: and, but, that, as, if, etc.
h. The expletive 'There' - There's snow on the ground.
i. The pronoun One - the small one.
j. The auxiliary verbs be, have, do, will, would, should, can, could, may, might, and must.
These verbs are usually unstressed even when they are principal verbs in a sentence. The exception to this rule is that they are stressed whenever they receive sentence stress, that is when they come at the end of a sentence or when they are used in question tags.

3. COMPOUND WORDS

a. Compound nouns have their stressed syllable in the first noun and middle stress in the second noun: cookie jàr, post òffice, English tèacher, tape recòrder, divísion chìef, etc.

b. Two word verbs often have their stress on the adverb: tùrn ón, gèt by, pùt off. A two word verb should not be confused with a verb plus prepositional phrase such as: believe in, listen to. The verb plus preposition always has a maxi-stress in the verb and no stress on the preposition.

APPLY THE RULES

If you apply the above rules, it will be quite easy to decide which words should be unstressed and which words should have stressed syllables.

Here are some examples for analysis:

a. the TABle is unSTEADy.
b. I will deLIVer it to them.
c. this TREE was PLANTed in May.
d. I CAN'T beLIEVE he ATE it.
e. we have LIVED in this CITy for FOUR YEARS.

4. THE PRONUNCIATION OF UNSTRESSED WORDS

The most difficult aspect to master is the unstressed pronunciation of all function words. Most Francophones and many other non-native speakers of English will stress these function words so strongly that they disturb the normal flow and rhythm of the utterance.

The importance of these few words is not in their number or their size, but in their frequency of usage. The ten most frequently used words in the English language are all function words. They are, the, of, and, to, a, in, that, it, is, and I. These ten words make up 25% of all that is written and spoken in English. All told, there are actually 60 monosyllabic function words in English and another 20 duo-syllabic ones. Added together these relatively few words make up over 30% of the language. To state it another way, nearly every third word will be a function word. Unfortunately these are precisely the words which students mispronounce - by mispronounce we mean over-pronounce. If we were to talk of an efficiency factor, it would be easy to show that in no other way can you improve your English more quickly and easily than by learning to pronounce these few unstressed words perfectly and automatically.

Here is a list of the monosyllabic function words:

a	had	might	their
am	has	must	them
an	have	my	they
and	he	of	till
are	her	on	to
as	him	or	up
at	his	own	us
but	I	shall	was
by	if	she	we
can	in	should	were
could	is	so	will
do	it	some	with
does	its	than	would
for	may	that	you
from	me	the	your

This list contains the duo-syllabic function words:

about	below
above	beneath
across	beside
against	between
along	beyond
among	toward
around	under
before	until
behind	unto
	upon

E. HELPFUL HINTS

1. UNSTRESSED WORDS

The following words in phrases will help demonstrate how to pronounce the unstressed words. Notice how often the vowels are reduced to /ə/ and that /h/ is dropped in liaison.

WORD	UNSTRESSED FORM	PHRASE		STRESSED FORM
a	/ə/	in a book	/ɪn ə bʊk/	/eɪ/
an	/ən/	half an hour	/hæf ən aʊr/	/æn/
and	/ən/	ham and eggs	/hæm ən egz/	/ænd/
are	/ər/	both are late	/boθ ər let/	/ɑr/
as	/əz/	as tired as a dog	/əztaɪrd əzə dɒg/	/æz/
can	/kən	he can run	/hi kən rʌn/	/kæn/
do	/də/	why do you go	/waɪ də jə go/	/du/
for	/fər/	dinner for four	/dɪnər fər for/	/for/
had	/əd/	she had sung	/ʃi əd sʌŋ/	/hæd/
has	/əz/	it has crashed	/ɪt əz kræʃt/	/hæz/
have	/əv/	we have won	/wi əv wʌn/	/hæv/
he	/i/	was he mad	/wʌz i mæd/	/hi/
her	/ər/	tell her	/tɛl ər/	/hʌr/
him	/ɪm	ask him	/æsk ɪm/	/hɪm/
his	/ɪz/	where's his hat	/werz ɪz hæt/	/ɪz/
of	/əv/	all of it	/ɑl əv ɪt/	/ʌv/
or	/ər/	five or six	/faɪv ər sɪks/	/ɔr/
our	/ɑr/	take our gas	/tek ɑr gæs/	/aʊr/
than	/ðən/	different than	/dɪfrənt ðən/	/ðæn/
that	/ðət/	he said that that	/ðət ðæt/	/ðæt/
the	/ðə/	the sofa	/ðə sofə/	/ðʌ/
them	/ðəm/	cut them	/kʌt əm/	/ðem/
to	/tə/	five to two	/faɪv tə tu/	/tu/
was	/wəz/	it was good	/ɪt wəz gʊd/	/wʌz/
you	/jə/	are you late	/ɑr jə let/	/ju/
your	/jər/	what's your name	/jər nem/	/jɔr/

2. CONTRACTIONS

English orthography acknowledges that many function words are pronounced in an unstressed manner. The reduction and liaison of these function words in spoken English is indicated in informal writing by the contraction. These contractions occur only when the verb functions as an auxiliary.

WORD	CONTRACTION
am	I'm
are	you're we're they're
is	she's he's it's where's when's how's what's why's who's
will	I'll you'll she'll he'll it'll we'll they'll
would	I'd you'd she'd he'd it'd we'd they'd
did	where'd why'd how'd when'd what'd
not	aren't isn't wasn't weren't hasn't haven't hadn't don't doesn't didn't can't couldn't won't wouldn't shouldn't mustn't needn't
us	let's
has	he's she's it's
have	I've you've 'll've we've they've could've would've should've might've must've what've where've when've why've how've
had	I'd you'd she'd he'd it'd we'd they'd

3. PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES

The following prefixes have vowels which are always reduced to a schwa /ə/: a-, be-, com-, con-, dis-, in-, suc-, sup-, to-.

The below listed grammatical suffixes have vowels which are always reduced to schwa /ə/ and often to oblivion: -ed to əd, d or t; es to əz; en to ən or n; ing to əŋ, ən or n, and -est to əst.

The following semantic suffixes all have at least one vowel reduced to schwa /ə/: -able, -age, -al, -ful, -ia, -ial, -ian, -ible, -ic, -ical, -ify, -ient, -ion, -ional, -inal, -ish, -ium, -less, -logy, -graphy, -ness, -omy, -ous.

4. RFDUCED PHRASES

The rhythm and stress patterns of English also force certain phrases to be reduced.

PHRASE	IN CONTEXT	TRANSCRIPTION
going to	I thought you were going to leave early.	/gɔɪntə/ /gənə/
want to	He didn't want to believe me.	/wɒnə/
have to	I have to work late tonight.	/hæftə/
has to	It has to be typed by four.	/hæstə/
supposed to	The pipeline is supposed to be finished soon.	/spostə/
I don't know	I don't know.	/aɪdəno/
I don't agree	I don't agree.	/aɪdonəgri/
used to	John said he used to drive a truck.	/justə/
a lot of	They've scored a lot of points recently.	/əlɒdə/
got to	We've got to try harder.	/gɒdə/
ought to	You ought to be more careful.	/ɒdə/
*that's the boy	That's the boy; keep it up.	/ædəbɔɪ/
is that	Is that right, eh?	/zæt/
could've	He could've told me.	/kʊdə/
how did you	How did you do it?	/haʊdʒə/

*Familiar

II. Drills and Exercises

A. FUNCTION WORD DRILLS

Practice pronouncing the following words and phrases being careful to weaken and obscure the unstressed syllables. Notice that the stress pattern of a multi-word phrase can be identical to that of a poly-syllabic word.

1.	appeár a béer	unáble a stáble	kangaróo of the zóo
2.	económics in the cómics	considerátion has been a nátion	understánd in the bánd
3.	acróss are cróssed	appróximate a bóx of it	consíderate can cóver it
4.	opínion an ónion	arrést a rést	devélop the féllow
5.	in the máil on the édge by the phóne	with her hélp at his síde of the páge	for a friend from your bóss up a trée

6. Whát've you dóne? Hów've you mánaged?
   Whére've they góne? Whén've they stúdied?
   Why've we joined? Whát've they fínished?

7. I'm going to give him a dime.
   You're going to hate our room.
   She's going to swim in the pool.
   We're going to sleep on the beach.
   They're going to develop a new program.

8. Do you want to watch T.V.?
   They want to forget it.
   We have to begin soon.
   I have to decide by Wednesday.
   He has to complete the project.
   The movie is supposed to be good.
   We're supposed to leave by noon.
   I don't know what you mean.
   I don't agree with your last statement.
   She used to play baseball.
   The students used to arrive on time.
   He has spent a lot of money.
   There's a lot of oil in Alberta.
   Someone ought to clean this mess up.

B. PHRASES IN PHONETIC SCRIPT

Pronounce the following phrases as if they were one word. Each phrase contains at least one common reduced unit.

1. /əvðəkléɪs/
2. /ɪzəstúdənt/
3. /əvðənaɪt/
4. /təðəbéŋk/
5. /ɪnðəwɛ́st/
6. /ɔnyərlɛ́ft/
7. /baɪðəwéɪ/
8. /ɪzmaɪbɔ́s/
9. /ɪnənɔ́fɪs/
10. /ɪzædərdɛ́sk/
11. /ɪnəbɑ́s/
12. /təðərír/
13. /ðozðətdrím/
14. /bɛ́kənənɛ́gz/
15. /aɪkənwɛ́t/
16. /wərdigɔ́/
17. /ɪtdəpɛ́nz/
18. /ɪtsgɔnəbirɑ́f/
19. /ɪtsspostəsnɔ́/
20. /frɛ́ntʃəníŋglɪʃ/
21. /aɪhæftəgɔ́/
22. /hikudəvkɑ́m/
23. /ɪtskaɪnəfɑ́n/
24. /wɔ́tshǽpniŋ/
25. /wɔ́tshǽpənd/
26. /ðəméɪnðətlɛ́ft/
27. /ʃudiəvkréɪd/
28. /wudiəvwɑ́n/

C. DICTATION

This is a dictation exercise to give the students practice in hearing the unstressed words.

1. I've given an hour every week.
2. Why'd he leave?
3. Do you know (when, why, where) her brother stopped?
4. The team (can, 'll, can't) take a joke.
5. Who has asked for (her, your) address?
6. The child traded marbles (for, or) comics.
7. This scarf is different (from, than) that one.
8. The girl (could've, would've, should've) enjoyed the party.
9. When are you going to tell me the truth?
10. He's kind of cute.
11. She got the book (for, from) the librarian.
12. It's better (that, than) you thought it was.
13. I need one (or, and) two.
14. I'll take this one (for, or, and) that one.
15. They would do it (if, as) I asked.

D. METRONOME DRILLS

Here are a series of sentences, with sentence-stresses marked. In each series, sentence b contains more syllables than sentence a, sentence c more than sentence b, and so on, but the number of stressed syllables is always the same, and the rhythm is always the same. Additional words and syllables do not appreciably lengthen the time it takes to say the whole sentence. Using a metronome to maintain the beat and set the rhythm, pronounce each series of sentences several times, making a stressed syllable fall on each beat. Fill in all the mini-syllables between beats. Set the metronome at 126.

1.a. Cówś éat gráss.

b. The cówś éat gráss.

c. The cówś will éat gráss.

d. The cówś will éat the gráss.

e. The cówś will have éaten the gráss.

The students will not be able to 'keep up' with the metronome after three or four syllables are added. The teacher should then stop the students, instruct them that they must reduce the added syllables, and write on the blackboard how to pronounce the stressed and unstressed syllables using large and small print and contractions:

COWS EAT GRASS

thə 'll 've 'n thə

2.a. Kíds híde tóys.

b. Some kids hide toys.

c. Some kids hide our toys.

d. Some kids have hidden our toys.

e. Some kids will have hidden our toys.

3.a. Cárs neéd gás.

b. The cars will need gas.

c. The cars will need some gas.

d. The cars will be needing some gas.

4.a. Meń beát rugs.

b. The men beat rugs.

c. The men beat their rugs.

d. The men will beat their rugs.

e. The men will have beaten their rugs.

5.a. Gírls néed móney.

b. The gírls will néed móney.

c. The gírls will néed some móney.

d. The gírls will be néeding some móney.

e. The gírls will be néeding some of their móney.

6.a. Déer lick sálts.

b. A deer licks salt.

c. A deer has licked the salt.

d. A deer has licked some of the salt.

e. A deer will have licked some of the salt.

7.a. Plánts grów fást.

b. Some plants grow fast.

c. Some plants will grow fast.

d. Some plants will grow faster.

E. MARK AND SAY

Mark the stress and the mini-syllables in the following sentences. After you finish marking the sentences, have your teacher say them, so that you can check your work. Pay attention to the reduced units and contractions. After your sentences are correct, practise saying them in chorus and individually.

1. There's going to be a holiday in February.
2. What can I do to help?
3. I'm happy with your progress.
4. We're supposed to take an inventory.
5. We've developed a new theory.
6. The beginning was very difficult.
7. He probably forgot his watch.
8. The boss is sort of upset.
9. When will the flexible hours be introduced?
10. This memo is to remind you of our meeting.

Mark the stresses and mini-syllables in the following questions and say aloud.

1. What did he say?
2. How's it going?
3. What's the matter?
4. Which newspaper do you take?
5. Why've you entered this competition?
6. When'll the meeting start?
7. Will she have to retire?
8. Are you moving to the tower?
9. Are they still on the second floor?
10. When're you going to leave?

Mark the following sentences and say aloud.

1. Good morning, Mr. Jones. How are you?
2. If it snows, we'll cancel the skating.
3. When's the test going to be?
4. What happened?
5. It depends on your point of view.
6. Which syllables are stressed?
7. Do you like coffee?
8. Would you like a cup of coffee?
9. She's a statistician for N.H.W. .
10. We're studying staffing and personnel.

Mark the stressed syllables to these questions and to your answers.

1. When do you get up?
2. What do you have for breakfast?
3. How do you get to work?
4. What department do you work for?
5. Where do you work?
6. How many hours do you work in a day?
7. How long have you been in Ottawa?
8. When did you start speaking English?

F. SPEED AND RHYTHM

The following is a speed and rhythm drill. Read it at normal conversational speed, and try to maintain an even, regular sentence rhythm. The teacher can use choral work and back-building.

1.a. I bought it.
b. I told you I bought it.
c. I've told you already that I bought it.
d. I've told you already that I bought it at the Bay.
e. I've told you already that I bought the wallet at the Bay.
f. I've told you already that I bought the wallet at the Bay this morning.

2.a. I'm amazed.
b. I'm amazed that you believe it.
c. I'm amazed that you believed such a story.
d. I'm amazed that you believe such an incredible story.
e. I'm amazed that anybody believed such an incredible story.

G. CONGRUENT PATTERNS

All the sentences within each of the groups below have the same rhythm, stress and intonation patterns. Repeat each group several times until you can produce the pattern correctly and easily.

1. · ● · ● · ⬤ ·

a. I want a pound of butter.
b. We shouldn't waste a minute.
c. I'd like to buy a sweater.
d. She doesn't speak much English.
e. He washed the basement windows.

2. · ● · · ● · · ⬤

a. I think that he wants us to run.
b. I told him to wait in the hall.
c. We wonder if Doris has heard.
d. She promised to carry it home.
e. It's better to harvest the corn.

3. · · ● · · ● · · · ⬤ ·

a. Our inflation may lead to a recession.
b. It's a plan that I read of in a journal.
c. I can give you the answer in a second.
d. I'll rewrite the proposal as I heard it.
e. You can tell in a jiffy that he needs it.

H. CREATING SENTENCES

Create sentences to match the following rhythm and stress patterns.

1. · ● · ⬤

Ex. I think he skis.
She turned it off.
It's hard to know.
It's not for sale.
I'd love to come.

2. · ⬤ · ·

I thought of her.
It's probable.
He studied it.
Examine them.

3. • · · ●

Give him a bath.
Take her away.
When did he go?
What can I say?

4. · ● ·

It's ready.
I'd try it.
He's different.

5. • · ●

Write a note.
Where's your scarf?
Come inside.

6. · • · · ●

I think that he flies.
We wanted to leave.
I finished my soup.

I. MATCHING PATTERNS

Match the following sentences with one of the six stress patterns.

1. · ● ·
2. · ● · ·
3. · ● · ●
4. · ● · · ●
5. ● · ●
6. ● · · ●

a. Try to sleep.
b. We like it.
c. Give him a kick.
d. I stepped on it.
e. I'd like to help.
f. It's broken.
g. What've we done?
h. The tractor's for sale.
i. I think he smokes.
j. Take a book.
k. She paid for us.
l. You promised to phone.

J. MODAL VERBS

Mark the stress pattern, and practice pronouncing.

She can tell.
She can talk.
She can choose.
She can jog.
She can swim.
She can sing.
She can read.
She can paint.

She can't tell.
She can't talk.
She can't choose.
She can't jog.
She can't swim.
She can't sing.
She can't read.
She can't paint.

Change the negative contracted form to the affirmative.

a.	He won't ride his bike.	He'll ride his bike.
b.	He won't write a book.	_____
c.	He won't change a dime.	_____
d.	He won't buy a car.	_____
e.	He won't sleep tonight.	_____
f.	He won't drink a beer.	_____
g.	He won't cast his vote.	_____

Write the negative contracted form; mark the stress pattern and practise saying.

a.	You should quit.	You shouldn't quit.
b.	They should strike.	_____
c.	She should smile.	_____
d.	We should rest.	_____
e.	I should run.	_____
f.	We should hide.	_____
g.	He should leave.	_____
h.	You should run.	_____
i.	It should stop.	_____

K. POEMS

Mark the poems and recite.

PETER PETER PUMPKIN EATER

Peter Peter pumpkin eater
Had a wife and couldn't keep her,
Put her in a pumpkin shell.
There he kept her very well.

THREE BLIND MICE

Three blind mice.
Three blind mice.
See how they run!
See how they run!
They all ran after the farmer's wife,
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife.
Did ever you see such a sight in your life
As three blind mice.

FUZZY WUZZY

Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear.
Fuzzy Wuzzy had no hair.
Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't fuzzy was he?

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the King's horses, and all the King's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

JACK-N-JILL

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
'N Jill came tumbling after.

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

by Clement C. Moore

'Twas the NIGHT before CHRISTmas when ALL through the HOUSE
Not a CREATure was STIRring, not Even a MOUSE.

The STOCKings were HUNG by the CHIMney with CARE,
In HOPES that St. NICHolas soon would be THERE.

The CHILDren were NESTled all SNUG in their BEDS,
While VISions of SUGarplums DANCED in their HEADS.

When out on the LAWN there aROSE such a CLATter,
I SPRANG from by BED to see what was the MATter.

Away to the WINdow I FLEW like a FLASH,
Tore open the SHUTters, and THREW up the SASH.

When, WHAT to my WONdering EYES should apPEAR,
But a MINiature SLEIGH, and EIGHT tiny reinDEER,

With a LITtle old DRIver, so LIVEly and QUICK;
I KNEW in a MOment it MUST be St. NICK.

More rapid than EAGles his REINdeer they CAME
And he WHISTled, and SHOUTed, and CALLed them by NAME:

"Now, DASHer! Now DANCer! Now PRANCer and VIXen!
On, COMet! On, CUpid! On DONDer and BLITZen!

To the TOP of the PORCH, to the TOP of the WALL!
Now, DASH away! DASH away! DASH away ALL!"

As DRY leaves that before the WILD hurricane FLY,
When they meet with an OBstacle, mount to the SKY,

So up to the HOUSEtop the REINdeer they FLEW
With a sleigh full of TOYS, and St. Nicholas, TOO.

And then in a TWINKling, I heard on the ROOF
The PRANCing and PAWing of each little HOOF.

As I DREW in my HEAD, and was turning aROUND,
Down the CHIMney St. Nicholas came with a BOUND.

He was DRESSED all in FUR, from his HEAD to his FOOT,
And his CLOTHES were all TARnished with ASHes and SOOT.

A bundle of TOYS he had flung on his BACK,
And he looked like a PEDdler just opening his PACK.

He spoke not a WORD, but went STRAIGHT to his WORK,
And FILLED all the STOCKings, then TURNED with a JERK.

And LAYing his FINger aSIDE of his NOSE,
and giving a NOD, up the CHIMney he ROSE.

He SPRANG to his SLEIGH, to his TEAM gave a WHISTle,
and aWAY they all FLEW like the DOWN of a THISTle.

But I heard him exCLAIM as he DROVE out of SIGHT,
"Merry CHRISTmas to ALL, and to ALL a good NIGHT."

L. TWO WORD VERBS AND PRONOUNS

Mark the stress pattern and pronounce these sentences containing two word verbs.

He turned it on.
We turned it off.
He put it on.
We took it off.
He put it off.
He wore it out.
He turned me down.
We brought it out.
We took it back.

Change the object from a noun to a pronoun.

He put his shoes on.	He put them on.
He took his belt off.	_____
We sent the note off.	_____
She turned the lamp down.	_____
He threw the bag out.	_____
He tried the vest on.	_____
You pushed the button in.	_____
She picked the film up.	_____
He knocked the post down.	_____

Change the nouns to pronouns. Remember to reduce the stress on the pronouns.

Joan saw Bill	She saw (h)im.
Henry loves Ruth	_____
The cat ate the mouse.	_____
May wrote to Jerry and me.	_____
I talked with June and Sam.	_____
You stepped on the dish.	_____
Linda brought the cake.	_____
Rose sang for the delegation.	_____
The team needs Ken and Vera.	_____
Frank thought of Penny.	_____
Sandy paid Edith for the lunch.	_____
Andy gave the books to Jim.	_____
Father took the matches away from Annie.	_____

M. LISTEN AND REPEAT

Here are some single sentences; listen and repeat.

1. Jím dídn't want to léave.
2. He cáme láte to the óffice.
3. We trávelled all níght in the tráin.
4. It's suppósed to be a good móvie.
5. It ísn't exáctly what I wánted.
6. Pléase cáll báck láter.
7. Would you mínd cálling báck láter?
8. I'm sórry you cán't cóme.
9. Pléase help yoursélf to some móre.
10. There's nóne léft.
11. I dón't want to wórk.
12. Every clóud has a sílver líning.
13. I dón't feel very wéll today.
14. I thínk he's feeling bétter than he did yésterday.
15. I'm nót súre of the númber.
16. It's very kínd of you to ásk me.
17. You can álways fínd me at this addréss.
18. We would be very pléased to cóme.
19. Some péople are álways a few minutes láte.
20. It dóesn't mátter at áll.
21. We can léave a nóte if he ísn't thére.
22. There's a mosquíto on your báck.
23. Whó should I ask for?
24. Thát's the addréss you have to sénd it to.
25. Have a cígarette!
26. Pléase táke one of míne.
27. It ísn't too far to wálk if you dón't want to táke the bús.
28. Let's stárt as eárly as we cán.
29. It's kínd of sád though.

N. ACTIVE LISTENING

Listen to news programmes, radio and T.V. programmes, discussions, talks, and conversations. Focus special attention on the stress and rhythm patterns. Listen to determine which words are unstressed and how they are pronounced when they are unstressed. Check and verify whether or not what you hear agrees with what is presented in this module.

O. TWO FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. For teaching purposes and to make a difficult problem easier, we have continuously shown the content words (nouns, verbs, adjs., advs.) in stressed position and only the function words in unstressed position. In fact, in natural speech even many content words are unstressed.

Compare the following pairs:

the TEACHer is a FINE MAN.
the TEACHer's a fine MAN.

WHEN is the DOCtor COMing?
WHEN'S the doctor COMing?

the MAIL COMES to the HOUSE.
the MAIL comes to the HOUSE.

2. Anglophones generally are not aware that they pronounce certain syllables, words and phrases in an unstressed manner.

Rather than spending a lot of time and energy asking how something is pronounced, the student is probably best advised to listen carefully and mimic those speakers he chooses to identify with.

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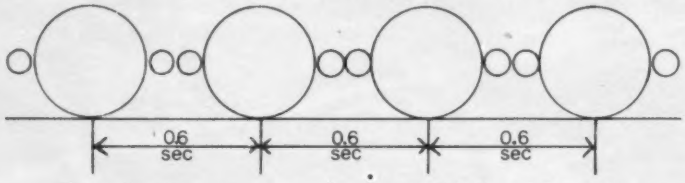
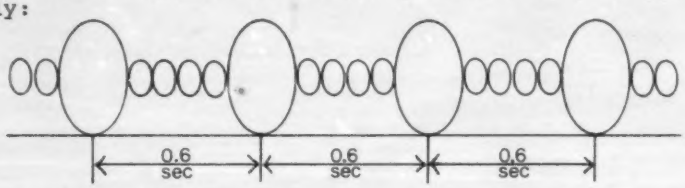
THE RHYTHM OF AN ENGLISH SENTENCE

English, typically, has a predetermined rhythm, and the syllables seem to scramble to accommodate this beat. The rhythm requires a major stressed syllable every 0.6 seconds approximately, and there are normally one or two unstressed syllables near each major syllable:



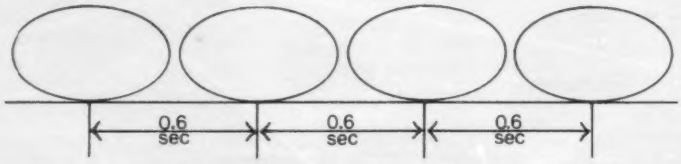
The rhythm of a typical English sentence

The rhythm is maintained by the stressed syllables. If there are several unstressed syllables around the stressed syllable, its duration is shortened, and the unstressed syllables must be glided over very rapidly:



The rhythm with several unstressed syllables

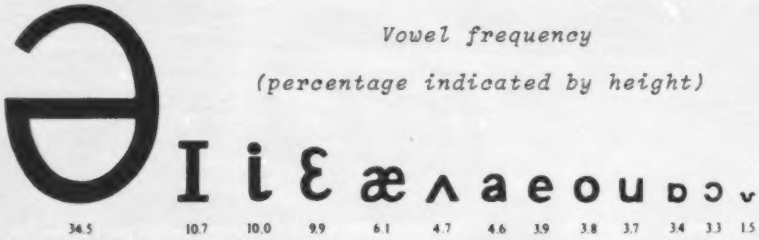
If there are no unstressed syllables nearby, the stressed syllables are naturally lengthened in order to fill the spaces of 0.6 second intervals:



The rhythm with no unstressed syllables

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SCHWA [ə]

Because rhythm and stress are so essential to understanding a complete message and because the schwa is the major key to teaching rhythm and stress, a vowel count was undertaken of running speech in Canadian English.

Vowel frequency

(percentage indicated by height)